

*Inspiring Figuratives  
for Artists*



*Two Hundred Female and  
Male Art Deco Figurative*

Volume Five

## **Books in the Series**

Two Hundred and Twenty Five Poses

Two Hundred and Fifty Female Figuratives

Sixty-Five Photographs by Alexander Grinberg

One Hundred Male Figuratives

Two Hundred Female and Male Art Deco Figuratives

## **Inspiring Figuratives for Artists: Volume Five**

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If you wish to sit for figurative photography here in Vancouver, or may want to submit your own figurative photographs, feel free to contact the editor of *Inspiring Figuratives for Artists* at

atelier\_press@ yahoo.com

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## Inspiring Figuratives for Artist series

The purpose of the *Inspiring Figurative for Artists* series is to provide study materials for the artistic praxis of artists who are trying to master the human form.

This edition focuses on Art Deco Figuratives. Art Deco is a period of artistry that spans the last decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first three or four decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Here is a simple and a beautiful example of Art Deco artistry. Look at her face. She is not a professional model, but a woman who has the courage to share her beauty with the world. This photograph is from the 1920's.



There is a sensibility to Art Deco that reflects its decorative nature. It is art that is not meant to be expressionist, or impressionist, but calm and pleasant.

In this next example you sense the calmness of the moment as well as an intimacy that is hard to put into words.



You can see the thoughtful composition in this *Figurative*. The mirror lends an intimacy and a context. Evidently we are here with her in her boudoir.

In this next example we have the model admiring a white rose.



The white rose lends a certain message to the *Figurative* does it not? She is chaste and vestal. The thought of the model is central to the Art Deco motif.

Sometimes the direct gaze of the model is what lends character.



In this example it is both the gaze and the playful smile that makes this piece pleasant and charming. It is after you take in her smile that you notice other aspects of the artwork. And what are some of the other aspects you notice?

Art Deco has simple themes and compositions. Here is one of its simplest.



The placement of the model's hands can convey dreaminess ...

During the Art Deco era modesty forbid the display of a woman's *source de vie* in its natural state, whether covered with pubic hair, or revealed. Like living sculptures, the Figuratives were 'whited-out' in the printing process. Still a number of Art Deco artists did find themselves at odds with notions of public modesty. These were primarily European Figuratives.

During the Art Deco era a similar restriction existed for the masculine form, where models were expected to wear loin clothes. Where you see a male



model *sans habillement* it is perhaps a European artist not an American. Here is a Male Odalisque from Europe.



Apart from a handful of artists like Thomas Eakins, who himself ran into trouble with his art school and with public sensibilities, there were very few Art Deco artists who sought out a 'Brave New World.'

Eakins, as you may know, sometimes sat as an artist's model for his women students. He also braved being photographed, and there are even two examples of him being photographed holding up one of his female art students. *Quel Scandale!* But that is a story for another day.

The first time I came across Art Deco *Figuratives* was when I happened upon a shoe box full of artwork that my uncle had of such things. I knocked the box open when I was playing hide and seek with one of my cousins and hiding in a downstairs closet. In his twenties my uncle had taken up photography as a pastime. He did landscapes, architectural, portraits and

*Figuratives*. He not only did Figurative Photography in the 1920's and 30's, he had also collected a number of works by other photographers. It was easy to see which *Figuratives* were done by my uncle and which were done by others. His were photographs, and the others were postcards.

All in all there were four dozen forgotten pieces in the box. It looked like the box had remained undisturbed for perhaps two or three decades. The dust told me that they would not be missed and so my young curiosity got the better of me and well ... the *Figuratives* found a new home.

My uncle was a generous gentleman and when I later told him I had borrowed the artwork he said I could keep them, for my aunt had asked him to do away with the photographs and postcards, but he hadn't gotten around to doing that. He could not bring himself to destroy works of art. Several of these discovered pieces are included in this book including *Violin d'Ingre*.

These Art Deco Figuratives were some of my earliest introductions to the artistry of the human form. My uncle's reluctance to 'do away with them' was also one of my earliest introductions to the temperament of an artist.

My uncle would also go on to introduce me to Man Ray and the famous Parisienne Kiki de Montparnasse, as well as the great French photographer Brassai and his concept of '*composing the picture within the camera*' as you take the photograph. This was heady stuff for a ten year old boy.

Here is a picture by Brassai of Kiki singing at a café in Montparnasse.



Brassai had a magic touch to composition. He knew to carry his camera to the interesting places around Paris. Here is his photo from a ball in Paris.



What emotion does this night time photograph by Brassai elicit?



Brassai was also invited to photograph the creative people of his age, people such as Pablo Picasso, Henry Miller and Jean Paul Sartre. Brassai's photography was Art Deco in the real.

*Inspiring Figuratives for Artists* is a series of books to help you with your *Figurative* artistic praxis. If you master the *Figurative* ... it is said you can master art. In each *Figurative* in this book search for vanishing points, as well as form and function.

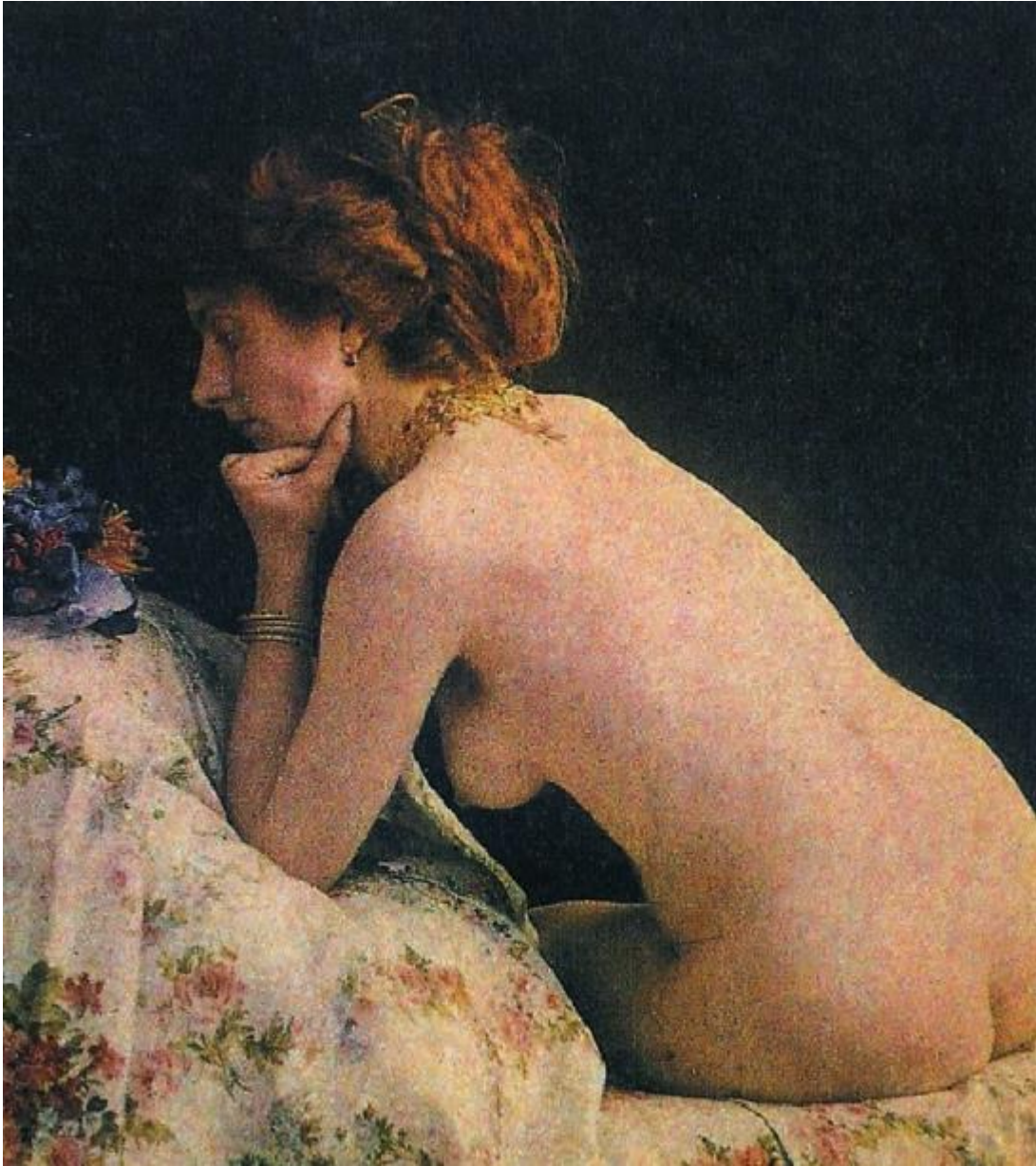
This book is the fifth in the *Inspiring Figuratives for Artists* series for artists wanting to expand their artistic praxis brought to you by *Atelier Press*.

Vancouver, 2024

*“The thing that is magnificent about photography is that it can produce images that incite emotions based on the subject matter alone.”*

Brassai

## **Art Deco Figuratives**



































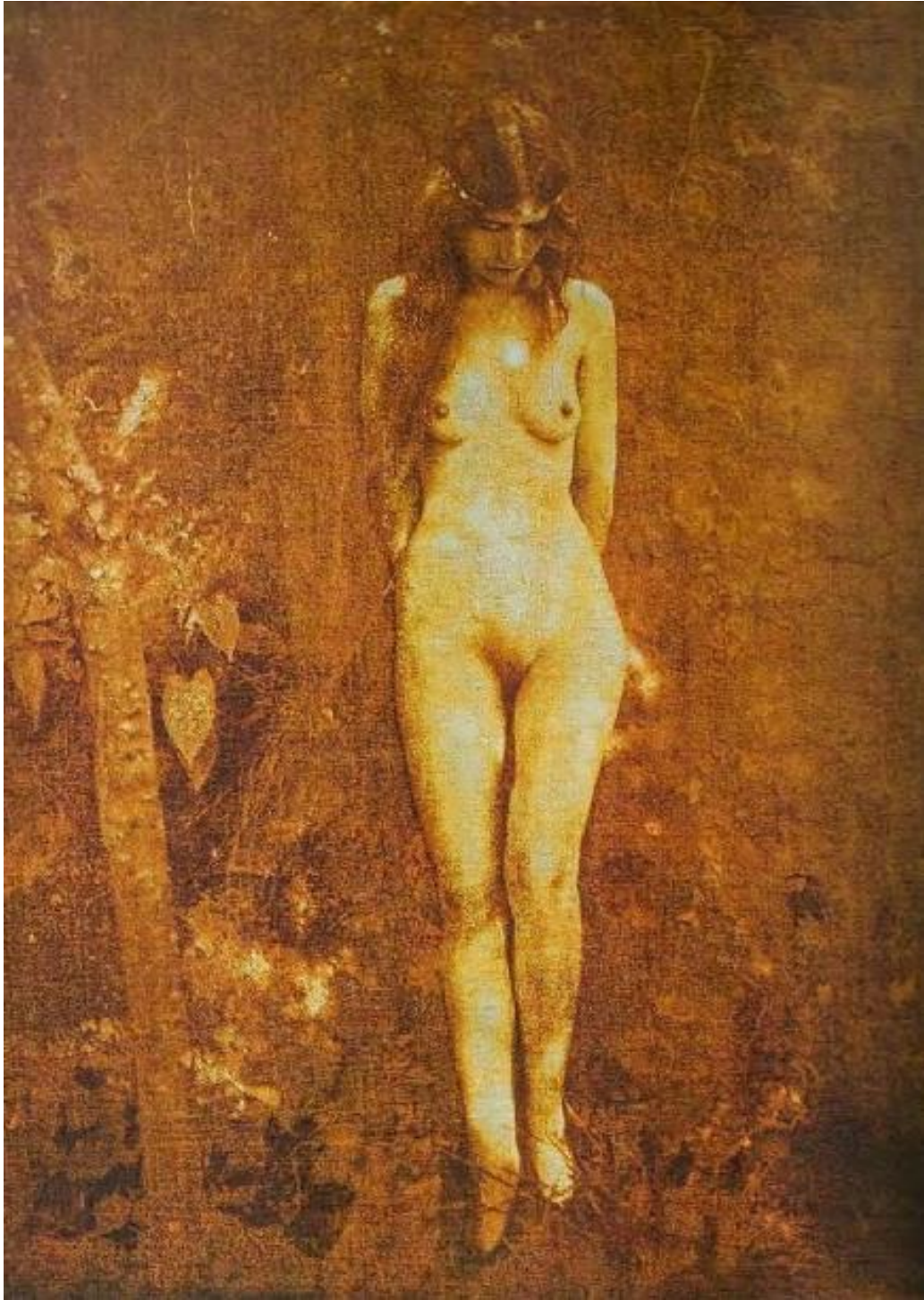
























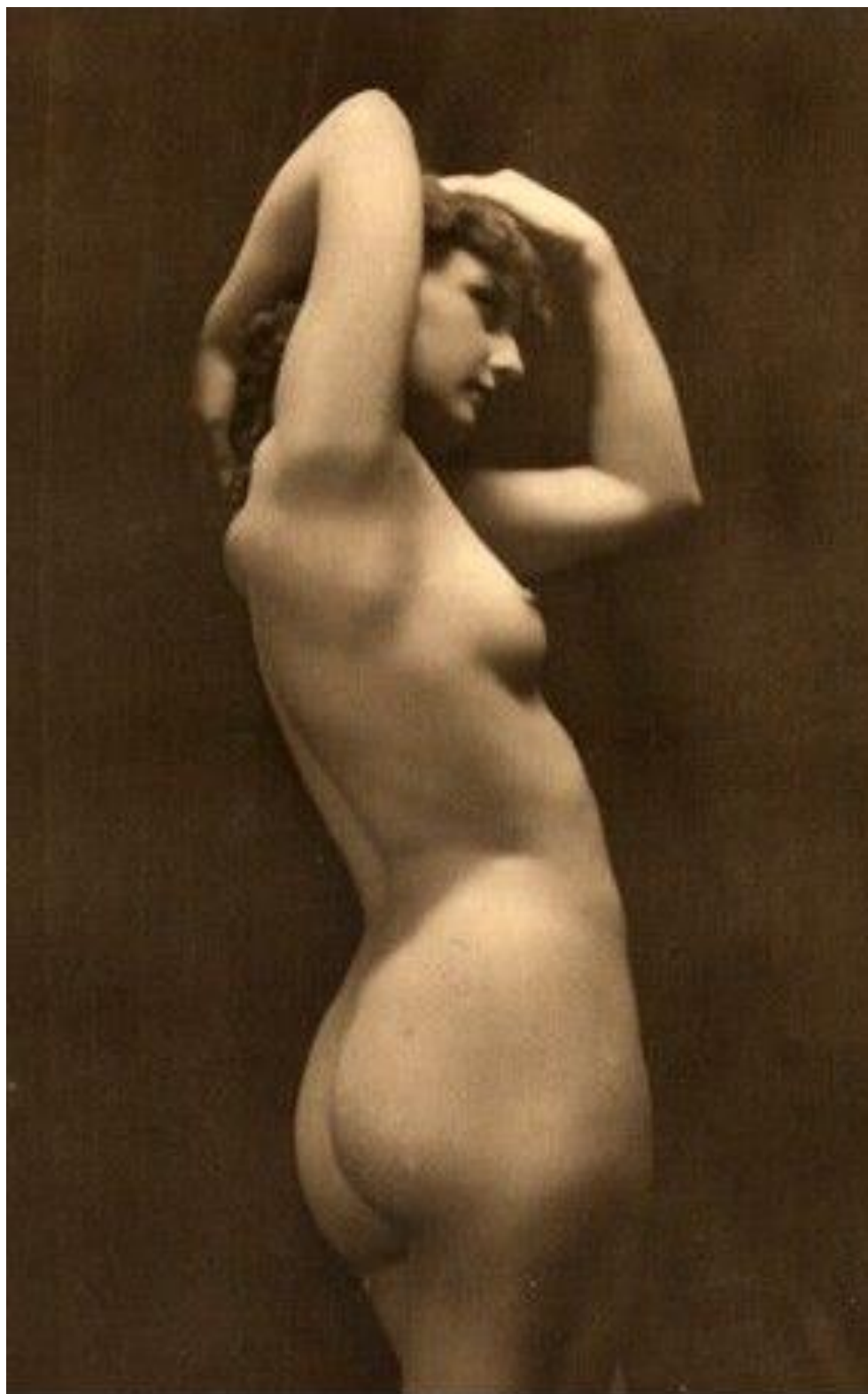






















































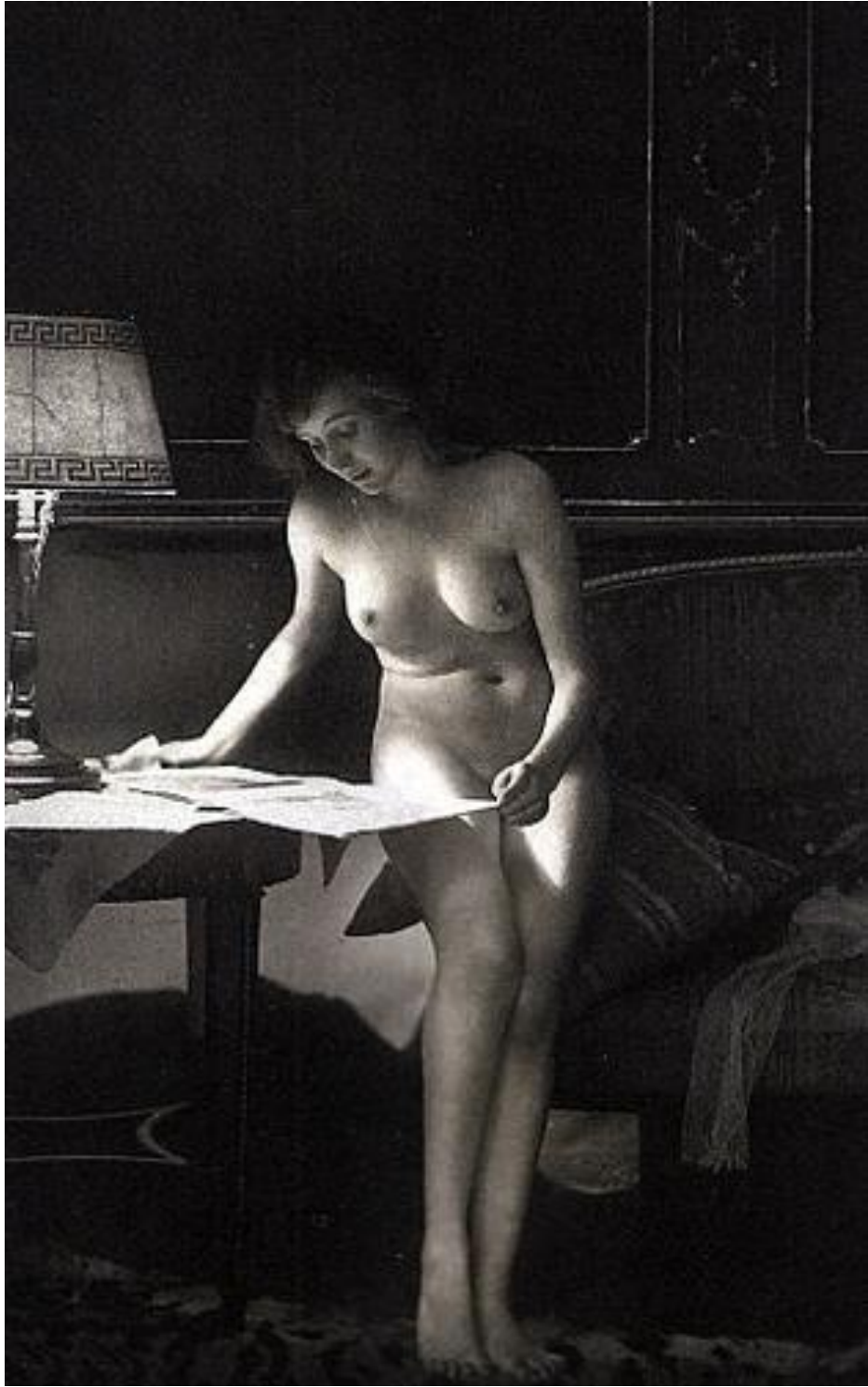














































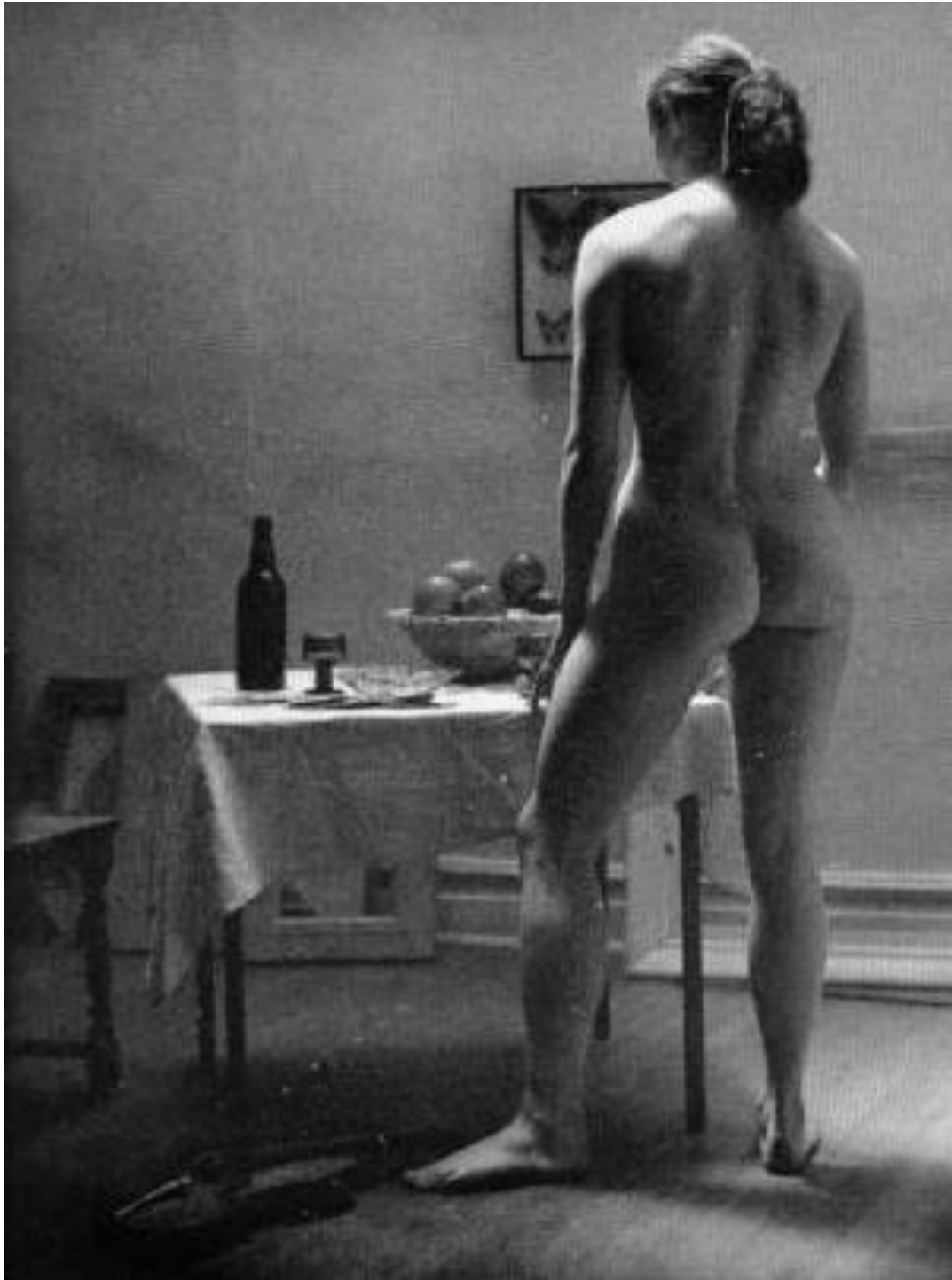






































































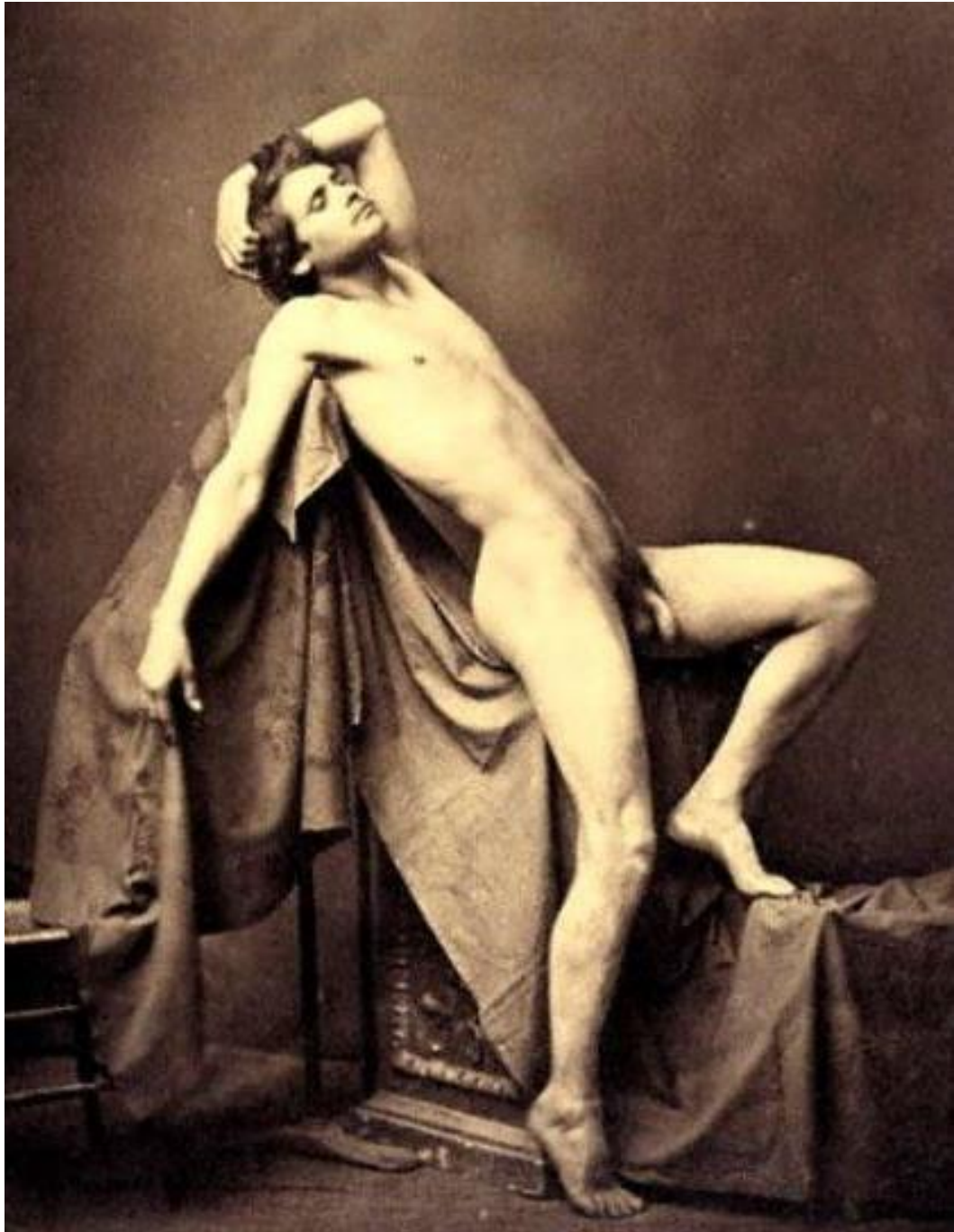




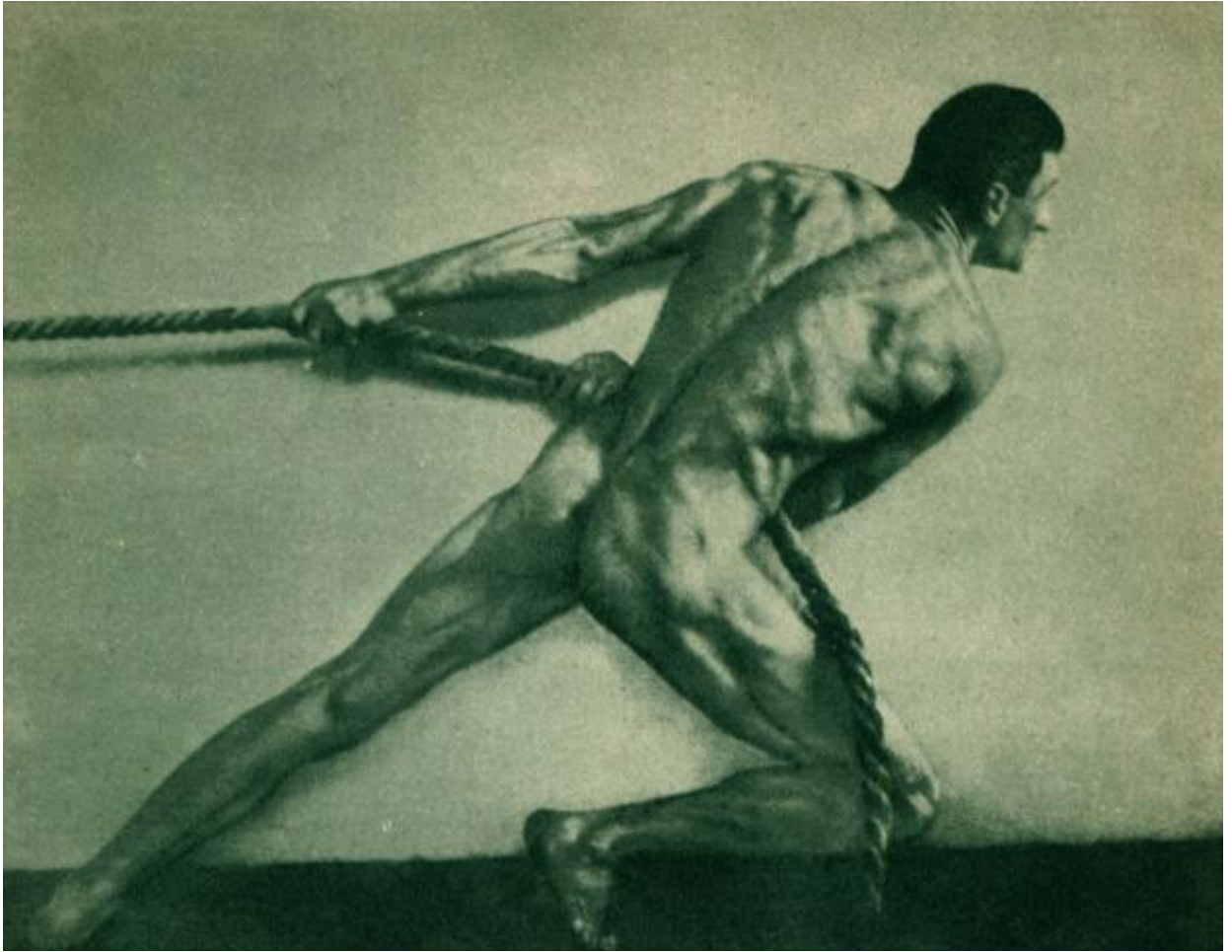


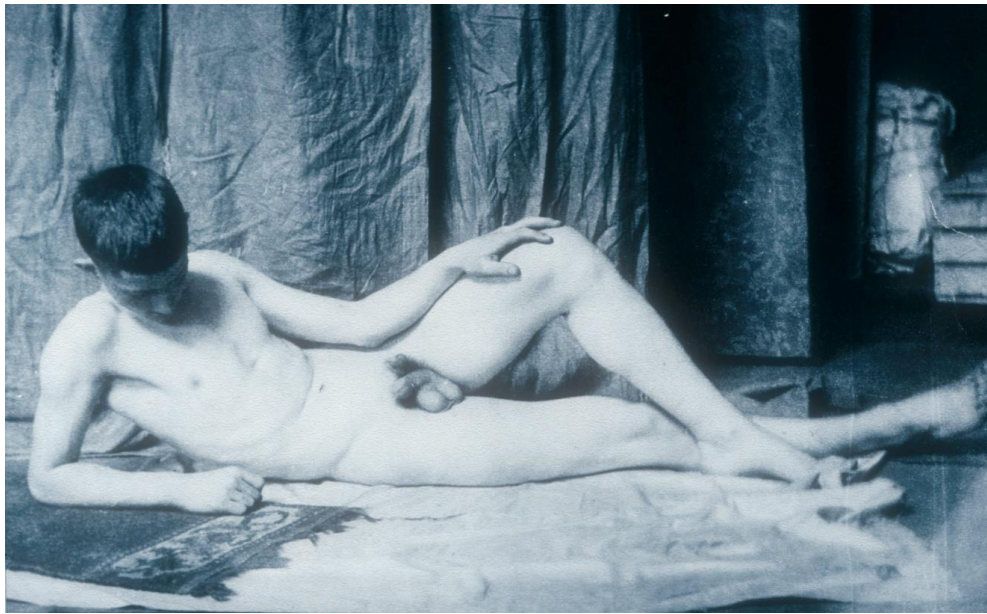
## **Art Deco Male Figuratives**

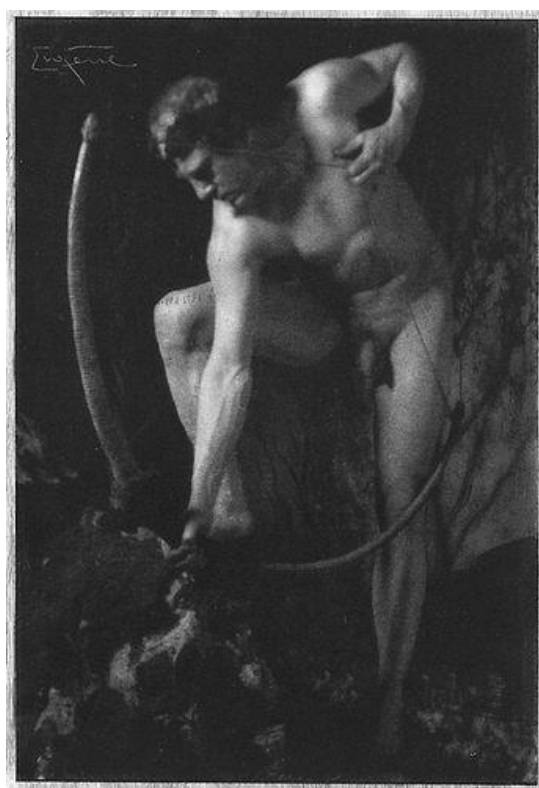






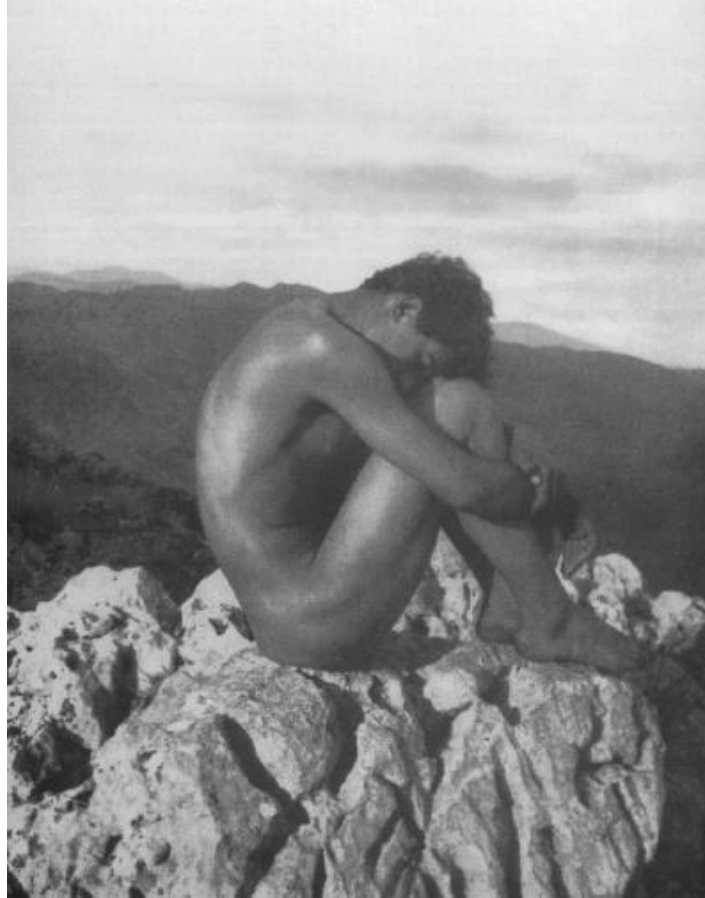


















## **Art Deco Male and Female Together**









































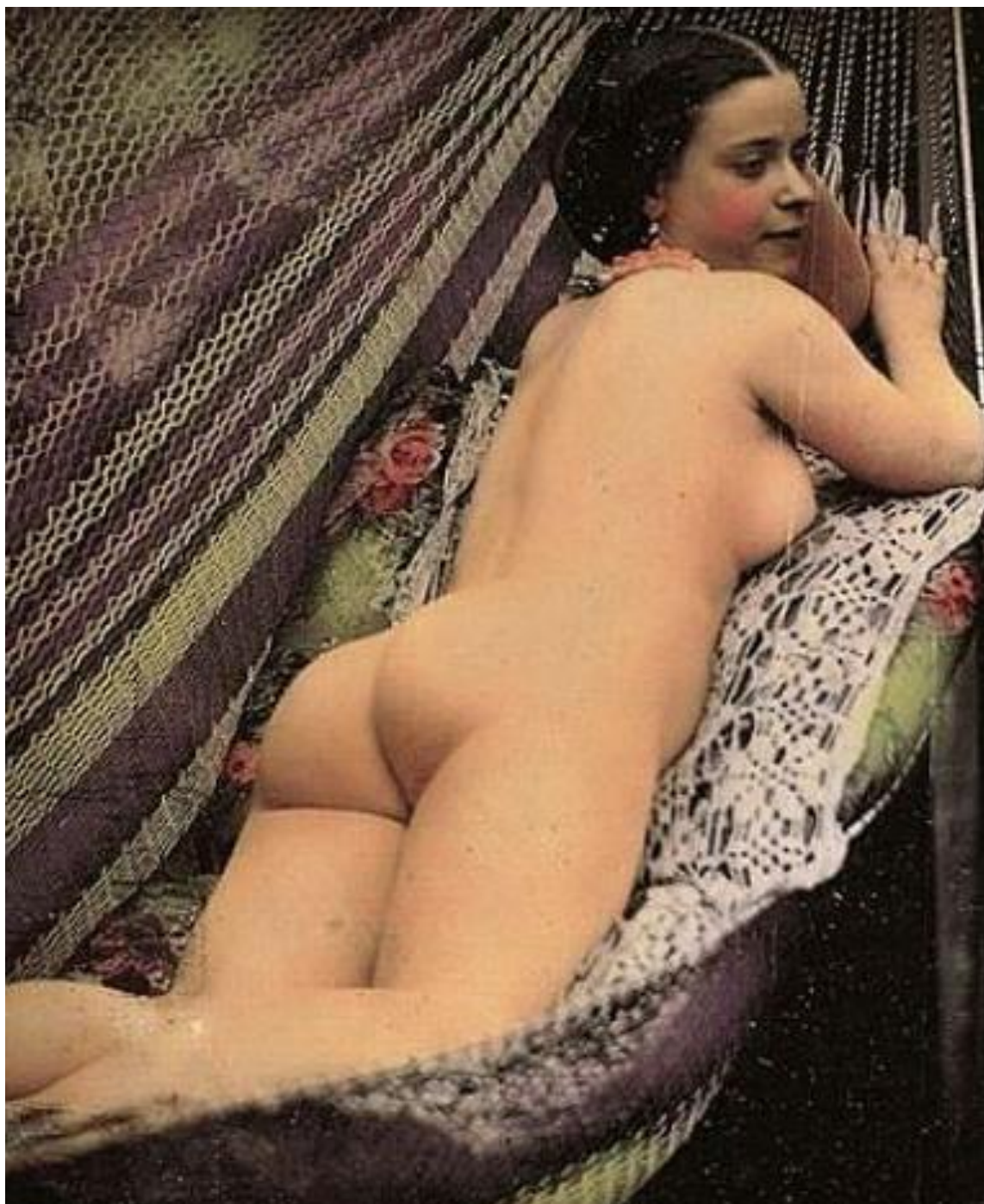


## **Art Deco Odalisque**



























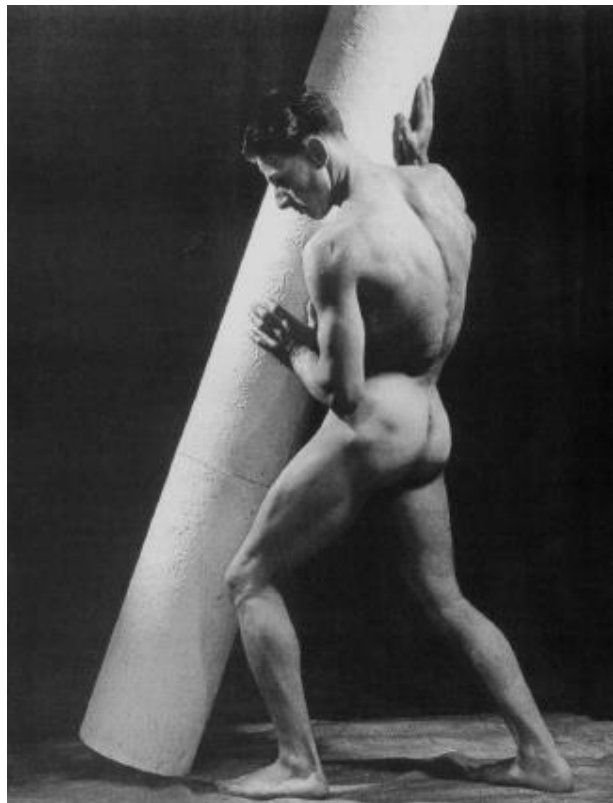






## **Art Deco Compositions**







































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